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Operations Begin at BNFL Waste Treatment Project

BNFL Inc. has received authorization to begin operations at the Advanced Mixed Waste Treatment Facility at the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory. The U.S. Department of Energy granted the authorization following a rigorous review of BNFL's equipment, personnel, and procedures.

Receipt of the DOE authorization allows BNFL to begin retrieving and characterizing waste, and preparing it for shipment to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico. As large sections of the waste stack are uncovered, the containers will be removed and then undergo a series of tests – including real-time radiography, gamma spectrometry, and sampling – to determine the exact contents.

Philip Strawbridge, President & CEO of BNFL Inc. stated that *"Today is a banner day for DOE, the State of Idaho, and BNFL as we meet the next Settlement Agreement milestone. The effort and commitment from each party involved in accelerating and overcoming the one-and-a-half-year delay is a shining example of how cleanup can be achieved throughout the complex."*

As BNFL Inc. continues to meet its contractual commitments and the associated Settlement Agreement milestones, Idaho's congressional delegation weighs in:

Senator Larry Craig said, *"I want to add my congratulations to BNFL and its workers, who have made this day possible. Facilities like AMWTP are the visible sign of our progress on the clean up goals at INEEL. With the operation of this facility, we will get even more waste characterized, processed, packaged and on its way out of Idaho and down to WIPP. I am proud to have played a role in supporting the funding for this facility along the way."*

"I am pleased that the INEEL continues to meet and move through the milestones on the Settlement Agreement," said Senator Mike Crapo. *"We are on track to complete this process in the manner agreed to, and this is a testament to the fine workers at the site, BNFL, and those involved in making sure that the agreement is met in a timely manner."*

Congressman Mike Simpson said, *"BNFL's transition into operations allows the continued reduction of risk by shipping waste out of the State under the terms of the 1995 Settlement*

Agreement, and continued environmental cleanup of the INEEL. I've been greatly impressed by BNFL's hard work and commitment to environmental cleanup in Idaho and look forward to working closely with them for many years."

While retrieval and characterization operations commence, BNFL is continuing to commission the waste processing portion of the facility. The initial project delays meant that BNFL had to start construction while design work was being completed. The facility was completed in December 2002 in record time – just 28 months from groundbreaking to completion – meeting the contractual and Settlement Agreement milestone. It is undergoing a series of tests prior to beginning treatment operations. The plant is expected to be in full operation next year.

The Advanced Mixed Waste Treatment Project represents a \$500 million BNFL investment under a privatized contract with DOE. The facility will be used to process approximately 65,000 cubic meters of transuranic waste stored at INEEL and prepare it for shipment out of Idaho. In addition, DOE has the option to request an additional 120,000 cubic meters be processed through the facility.

BNFL Inc. is an Arlington, Virginia-based environmental cleanup company providing waste management, decontamination and decommissioning, and facility operations for the nation's most difficult environmental and nuclear challenges.

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